



**McHenry County  
Department of Planning and Development**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE:** May 4, 2018

**CONTACT:** Joanna Colletti  
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**RE:** McHenry County Wetland Restoration Fund - Sterne's Woods Fen Restoration - Phase II

The McHenry County Board is pleased to announce that it has awarded funding for the first project under the County's Wetland Restoration Fund program. The Wetland Restoration Fund was created to provide greater opportunities for approved projects to mitigate for wetland impacts under the county's jurisdiction (Isolated Waters of McHenry County or IWMC). Per the countywide Stormwater Management Ordinance, projects that impact IWMC must mitigate (replace) the impacted wetland. Approved projects have the opportunity to provide mitigation by paying into the Wetland Restoration Fund. Money paid into the Fund will be used to help pay for wetland restoration projects in McHenry County. Applicants seeking funding for wetland restoration projects through the program will be evaluated on a variety of criteria including the merits of the proposed project and the qualifications of the applicant. The goal of the program is to achieve a countywide goal of "no-net-loss" of wetland acreage.

The first project to be approved to receive funding through the Wetland Restoration Fund is the Crystal Lake Park District's *Sterne's Fen Wetland Restoration - Phase II*. Under the current phase of the project, the Park District will be reimbursed for up to \$118,810 to restore or enhance approximately 7.8 acres of wetland habitat. The project involves restoring hydrology and native vegetation to a wetland that has been artificially drained due to ditches that formed in the site's organic soils. The Park District and their contractors will install a series of rock check dams within the channels, remove invasive species, and replant native vegetation. The rock check dams slow the water moving through the channels, thereby raising the water table throughout the entire wetland and preventing further erosion from occurring. The intact portions of the wetland in Sterne's Fen include extremely high quality habitat. It is anticipated that much of the drained wetland will revert to high quality habitat once wetland hydrology has returned. If areas do not respond favorably on their own, seed will be collected from the high quality areas and re-distributed in the restoration area.

The Crystal Lake Park District and their contractors have a proven track record for success. With assistance from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and the efforts of dedicated volunteers, restoration work has been taking place at Sterne's Woods and Fen for about twenty years. Work on the project is expected to begin in the fall of 2018. The progress of the

restoration work will be monitored for approximately five years to ensure the required performance standards are achieved. Volunteer workdays are held every month if you are interested in learning more about Sterne's Woods and Fen or would like to get involved with the restoration activities. Please visit the Crystal Lake Park District website for details.

As funds become available in the future, the McHenry County Stormwater Management Commission will send out Requests for Proposals for potential wetland restoration projects to apply for funding through the Wetland Restoration Fund. For additional information about the Wetland Restoration Fund, please contact Joanna Colletti, Water Resources Manager, with the Department of Planning and Development at [jscolletti@mchenrycountyil.gov](mailto:jscolletti@mchenrycountyil.gov).

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